

SUBJECTS.**31. Grant of permission for the removal of trees on private lands without a pass.**

free of charge, from *unreserved* lands, timber—other than royal and reserved trees—dry wood, thorns, leaves of trees and shrubs, for *bona fide* agricultural and domestic purposes.

Mr. Padmanabhan Narayanan (Member, Pathanapuram Taluk) said that, under para 7 of the Forest Rules, a pass had to be taken out from the Divisional Forest Officer before any tree, other than royal trees, standing on private land, could be removed by the owner. The jurisdiction of a Divisional Forest Officer extended over about five taluks, and it was difficult in each individual case to apply for and obtain his permission in proper time. The result of the arrangement was that inordinate delay occurred and the passes were often received at a time when the necessity for them had ceased. There was thus loss and inconvenience to the people. With the present staff of forest guards, it should be very easy for the Forest department to prevent any possible illicit removal of timber from the Sirkar forests. The restriction on the liberty of the people to remove trees, other than royal, from their own registered holdings, was unnecessary and might be removed. Further, in cases of clandestine removal of timber from Sirkar lands, Section 52 of the Regulation operated to safeguard the interests of Government, as, under that Section, the onus of proving that the timber was removed from private land was upon the party concerned.

Dewan's reply.—The rule complained of is intended as a precaution against the illicit removal of timber from Sirkar lands. The Conservator will be asked to report on the working of this rule and to say if it can be relaxed without endangering the Sirkar interests. The Conservator will also be asked to see that applications are disposed of without delay.

32. Removal of obstruction to hill cultivation.

Mr. Geeverghese Catanar Geeverghese (Member, Chennannur Taluk) represented that the ryots were now experiencing much obstruction at the hands of the officers of the Forest department in carrying on malavirippu cultivation on hill slopes, and the people living near the hills, who mainly depended upon such cultivation, suffered greatly in consequence. He requested that orders might be issued to stop the reservation of lands within a radius of two miles from the hills and to afford every facility to the ryots for cultivation within those areas.

Dewan's reply.—The clearing and cultivation of hill slopes is an undesirable thing and the policy of Government is to prevent such clearing and cultivation as far as